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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 August 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Please recycle

The war on Yemen must be investigated

UN declares a 'Level 3'[1] humanitarian emergency in Yemen

On 2 July, the United Nations added Yemen to the list of highest-level humanitarian emergencies; a level 3 crisis. The country is facing a humanitarian catastrophe, with 21 million people, 80% of Yemen's population, in need of humanitarian assistance. A major food crisis is looming.

EDUCATION

More than 3,600 schools to close and driven students and their families to safer areas of the country. At least 248 schools have been directly damaged; is having a devastating impact on the country's education system – and on the chances of millions of children to access learning. 270 others are hosting Internally Displaced People (IDPs).[2]

Health and food

Meanwhile, over 2.5 million children are at risk of diarrhea due to the unavailability of safe water, poor sanitary conditions and lack of access to Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS)[3] -- compared to 1.5 million prior to the conflict.

"The damage to Yemen's next generation may become irreversible if we don't reach children quickly with the right food at the right time. We must act now before it is too late," said Ertharin Cousin, WFP Executive Director.[4]

Food shortages, lack of fresh water, and low fuel stocks have created a "perfect storm" for the Yemeni people, the WFP estimated nearly 13 million people urgently require help.[5]

According to a recent joint survey released by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP)[6], 6 million people in Yemen are slipping towards severe hunger and now need emergency food and life-saving assistance. In addition to the population facing a food security 'emergency,' over 6.5 million people are classified as facing a food insecurity security 'crisis.'

The conflict exacerbates the country's extremely fragile food security situation. WFP estimates that the number of food insecure people in "Right now, the conflict-driven convergence between the lack of staple food, access to clean water, and a diminished fuel supply create the dawn of a perfect storm for the most vulnerable Yemeni people," addCousin. [7]

The health sectors is too been targeted by Saud Air strikes, many of the medial centers have been leveled, while more than 54 health centers have also been shut down due to these air raids. The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in that country, Ahmed Shadoul, on 24th August,2015,[8]warned against human catastrophe in

[1] http://www.rescue.org/blog/l3-101-basics-level-3-emergencies
[2]http://www.unicef.org/mena/media_10454.html
[3]http://www.unicef.org.uk/Media-centre/Press-releases/Millions-of-children-in-war-torn-Yemen-at-risk of-disease-and-malnutrition--Unicef/

[4]http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-head-warns-growing-food-crisis-yemen-amid-challenges-reaching-people-and-short
[5]http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-33999099
[6] http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51187#.Vd8lumb9q2y
[7]
[8] http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51711#.Vd8Uv2b9q2w

Yemen. He added that the state of health is deteriorating in Yemen on a daily basis and throughout a number of provinces of that country such as Aden Province many are unable to provide food, fuel, and drinking water for themselves, and are even deprived of medical treatment.

The coalition has ignored those calls and in fact intensified its military campaign, the statement of Johannes Van Der Klaauw referred to the impossibility of aid agencies getting emergency medical assistance and personnel into the country when the airports, the country's main lifelines, are being bombed by coalition warplanes. This is having a critical effect on the civilian population.

IDP

As of August 2015, 1,439,100 internally displaced people in Yemen[9]. Mass population movement and a failing health system have exposed internally displaced people in Yemen to increased, life-threatening health risks, people have fled the violence to neighbouring governorates. Many of them are housed in public spaces where living conditions are overcrowded and often unsanitary. Within schools, for example, some of which host upwards of hundreds of displaced Yemenis, people share a single washroom per gender.

Culture

On the night of 31st May One of the grandest engineering marvels of the ancient world—the Great Dam of Marib in central Yemen—has been damaged in an airstrike, according to local news reports and archaeological experts in touch with local sources.[10]

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has condemned the airstrikes on the ancient city of Marib in Yemen and is calling on all parties involved in the conflict to refrain from targeting the country's unique cultural heritage.

This came just one week after the National Museum in Dhamar was completely destroyed. The museum contained some 12,500 artefacts bearing witness to the rich cultural heritage of the surrounding region.

Many other historical sites suffered collateral damage from the armed conflict, including the old cities of Sana' and Zabid, inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as the historic centre of Sada'a, Mukallaand Taez. [11]

Conclusion

- Humanitarian pauses are urgently needed to safely bring aid workers and supplies into the country and for the aid to reach millions of people in need. This requires the support of all parties to the conflict to facilitate the safe passage of aid and unimpeded access for humanitarians to affected areas in accordance with IHL. Humanitarian operations by some 90 organizations are ongoing where possible, mainly through national staff and partners, but these efforts are far from enough given that imports of commercial supplies have also been hampered, increasing the vulnerability of ordinary Yeminis. Following temporary relocations, the UN and partners are exploring ways of redeploying international staff to Yemen in the coming days to support the response.

[9] http://www.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/figures-analysis

[10] http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/06/150603-Yemen-ancient-Sheba-dam-heritage-destruction-Middle-East-archaeology/

[11] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/no_cache/unesco/themes/pcpd/dynamic-content-single-view/news/unesco_director_general_condemns_airstrikes_on_yemens_cultural_heritage/#.Vd7nAmb9q2w

- We call council members to prioritize civilians and work to ensure that humanitarian aid, including food, water and medical supplies, which are desperately needed, can reach Yemen to save lives. We also urge the members to live up to its obligations to the people of Yemen by imposing immediate humanitarian pause,. A pause that would allow international aid organizations to deliver urgently needed food, medicine, and fuel to citizens throughout Yemen. It would also allow for the delivery of vital commercial goods on which Yemen depends.

- We call the HRC members at the next HRC 30th Session in September, should act to break the culture of impunity in Yemen and adopt a resolution to establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate alleged abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by all parties since September 2014, including in connection with the air and sea blockade imposed by coalition forces.

- The investigation should establish the facts, collect and conserve information related to abuses and violations, and identify those suspected of criminal responsibility for serious abuses and violations with a view to ensuring that they are brought to justice in fair trials.
- We would like to draw your attention to The Human Rights Council,resolution 27/19 adopted in September 2014 on Yemen,[12] unanimously called for "an investigation into all cases of violations and abuses of human rights and cases of violations of international humanitarian law."

- We welcome any initiatives that seek to reduce the level of violence, notably shelling and coalition airstrikes in populated areas that harm civilians and civilian infrastructure. The country's airports and seaports constitute a lifeline given that Yemen relies on imports for 90 per cent of its food and most of its fuel. However, these lifelines have been hampered as most of Yemen's airports are not open to civilian traffic, and transports by sea are subject to the coalition's inspection regime related to the arms embargo mandated by the UN Security Council

[12] http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G14/171/03/PDF/G1417103.pdf?OpenElement